

PROGRESS FOR AMERICA'S WOMEN

The Democratic-led 111th Congress has been enacting key measures to improve the lives of America's women and their families; in sharp contrast, Republicans are out-of-touch with women's concerns and have consistently opposed these gains.

America is moving forward, and Democrats will continue to focus on creating good jobs for women, expanding opportunities for women-owned small businesses, better supporting working women at home and in their jobs, protecting Medicare from Republican voucher schemes, and preserving Social Security from Republican plans to privatize and cut it. Protecting Social Security is key for women; 58% of Social Security recipients are women and for a majority of women over 65, Social Security provides more than half of their income.

TOP 5 ACTIONS IN THE 111TH CONGRESS

EQUAL PAY FOR WOMEN

One of the very top issues for American women is equal pay for equal work. The first substantive bill enacted into law in the 111th Congress was the **Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act**. It restored the right of women and other workers to challenge unfair pay—by reversing the May 2007 *Ledbetter v Goodyear* Supreme Court decision that overturned precedent and made it much more difficult for workers to pursue pay discrimination claims. The bill restored prior law—allowing a complaint to be filed within 180 days of a discriminatory paycheck, not of an employer's first decision to discriminate. The bill was supported by many groups, including AAUW, Business and Professional Women, and the Women's Chamber of Commerce. *98% of House Republicans voted NO, including the House GOP Leadership.*

CREATING AND SAVING GOOD JOBS FOR WOMEN

As with all Americans, American women want a fair shot at getting and keeping a good job—during a struggling economy caused by the Bush recession. According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, the **Recovery Act** has been responsible for up to 3.3 million jobs nationwide through June 2010. The Recovery Act included numerous provisions to expand job opportunities and job training for women, including in non-traditional careers like hundreds of thousands of new clean energy jobs and skills training and expanded opportunities for women in the transportation industry. An independent report by two prominent economists, including an advisor to the McCain for President campaign, concluded that the Recovery Act and certain actions by the Federal Reserve helped prevent a second Great Depression—and that, without them, we would have lost an additional 8 million jobs and unemployment today would be over 16%. That would have been a disaster for American women and their families. *100% of House Republicans voted NO, including the House GOP Leadership.*

The Recovery Act's Making Work Pay Tax Credit benefited 74 million middle-class women last year, with women receiving \$600, on average, more in their pocketbooks.

More than 12,000 SBA Recovery Act loans have gone to women-owned small businesses, providing \$3 billion in lending support to help them create jobs and grow their businesses.

Millions of American women own a small business—and have had trouble getting critical access to credit in the Bush recession. The **Small Business Jobs Act** unlocked up to \$300 billion in private sector lending to them and included 8 new small business tax cuts, worth \$12 billion. *99% of House Republicans voted NO, including the House GOP Leadership.*

PROTECTING CHILDREN & TEENS FROM TOBACCO AND UNSAFE FOOD

Protecting our children from health dangers is a primary responsibility of government—and this Congress has made great strides to protect children from the dangers of smoking and from the nightmare of contaminated food.

Every day, more than 3,500 children try a cigarette for the first time, and another 1,000 will become new, regular daily smokers. One-third of these youth will eventually die prematurely as a result. The **Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act**, enacted in 2009, grants the Food and Drug Administration authority to regulate the advertising, marketing, and manufacturing of tobacco products, including banning all outdoor tobacco advertising within 1,000 feet of schools and playgrounds; restricting vending machines and self-service displays to adult-only facilities; requiring retailers to verify age for all over-the-counter sales; and providing for federal enforcement and penalties against retailers who sell to minors. *56% of House Republicans voted NO, including the House GOP Leadership.*

Each year, more than 325,000 Americans are hospitalized and 5,000 die from consuming contaminated food. In just the last few years, there has been a string of food-borne illness outbreaks in foods consumed by millions of Americans each day—from spinach to peppers to peanut butter. The House passed a landmark food safety bill, the **Food Safety Enhancement Act**, that makes several long-overdue repairs to our broken food safety system—giving the FDA new powers and tools to ensure our food is safe. It requires more frequent inspections of food processing facilities; gives FDA the authority to order a food recall if a company fails to do so when requested; and takes steps to ensure that imported foods meet safety standards. *69% of House Republicans voted NO on this bill, including the House GOP Leadership—and the bill has been held up in the Senate by threats of Republican obstruction.*

BEING A WOMAN WILL NO LONGER BE A “PRE-EXISTING CONDITION”

Under the abusive practices of many health insurers, being a woman has essentially been treated as a pre-existing condition. In the individual insurance market, where millions of women purchase coverage every year, women have suffered enormous discrimination for decades—many health insurers have treated pregnancy, having had a C-section, and even being the victim of domestic violence as a pre-existing condition. These health insurers have also used “gender rating”—charging women more than men for the same coverage. The **Affordable Care Act** requires health insurance companies to stop discriminating against women when reforms are fully implemented in 2014—eliminating pre-existing conditions and stopping insurers from being able to charge women more than men for the same coverage. *100% of House Republicans voted NO on this bill, including the House GOP Leadership. House Republican Leader Boehner has continually vowed that the number-one priority of a Republican Majority would be to repeal the health reform bill.*

BANNING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST SICK CHILDREN & ENSURING COVERAGE FOR AT LEAST 11 MILLION CHILDREN

All American children deserve to have a healthy start in life. One of the cruelest practices of America’s health insurance industry has been denying children with pre-existing conditions coverage—or dropping them from coverage when they get sick. The **Affordable Care Act** ended those practices for new plan years starting in September under the new Patient’s Bill of Rights. It also gives comfort to parents of adult children under the age of 26—who can finally stay on their parents’ insurance policy if they need it. *100% of House Republicans voted NO—and they threaten to repeal these historic gains.*

The second substantive bill enacted into law in the 111th Congress provided health care coverage for 11 million children. The **Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Reauthorization Act** preserved coverage for 7 million children covered by CHIP and extended coverage to 4 million uninsured children who are eligible for, but not yet enrolled in, CHIP and Medicaid. The bill was fully paid for by increasing the tobacco tax. *77% of House Republicans voted NO, including the House GOP Leadership—opposing legislation which simply strengthened the popular, bipartisan Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP).*